



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INDEPENDENCE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO BANK ROBBERY; RV PURCHASED WITH STOLEN CASHIER'S CHECK

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Independence, Mo., man pleaded guilty today to robbing the Winterset State Bank in Harrisonville, Mo. He used the cashier's check taken in that robbery to purchase a recreational vehicle, which he drove to South Dakota, where he was arrested.

George L. Curtis, 75, of Independence, Mo., pleaded guilty this afternoon before U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs to robbing a federally insured bank with the use of a firearm.

According to Graves, **Curtis** admitted that he robbed Winterset State Bank, 1503 North Highway 291, Harrisonville, Mo., on July 12, 2002, using a replica handgun to take a \$200,000 cashier's check from a bank employee. **Curtis** was indicted by a federal grand jury on August 7, 2002.

When he entered Winterset State Bank on the morning of the robbery, Graves said, **Curtis** was directed to an office. After showing a bank employee a handgun tucked into the waistband of his trousers, **Curtis** ordered the employee to make out a cashier's check for \$200,000 payable to him, then left the bank.

Graves explained that **Curtis** had been discussing purchasing an RV from Trailside RV Center since July 1, 2002. On July 8, 2002, **Curtis** selected a 2002 Holiday Rambler Endeavor, approximately 40 feet in length, and returned on July 12, 2002 – after robbing Winterset State Bank – to purchase the RV using the stolen \$200,000 cashier's check. Rather than refund the difference between the cashier's check and the purchase price, Graves said, an employee from Trailside RV Center accompanied **Curtis** to U.S. Bank, 18781 East 39th Street, Independence, Mo., to have a separate cashier's check drawn. **Curtis**, who had an account at the bank, presented

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the stolen \$200,000 cashier's check and received a \$166,155 cashier's check made payable to Trailside RV Center and \$5,000 in cash from the bank, depositing the remainder of the cashier's check into his account.

Curtis then returned to Trailside RV Center, Graves said, completed the purchase, and left in the Holiday Rambler Endeavor. **Curtis** told his daughter that he was taking his girlfriend and some of her family members to Mt. Rushmore for the weekend.

According to Graves, **Curtis** was arrested at approximately 4:30 p.m. on July 14, 2002, at a truck stop in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, by officers of the Minehaha County Sheriff's Department and South Dakota Highway Patrol.

As a result of his guilty plea today, **Curtis** may be subject to a sentence of up to 25 years in prison plus a fine up to \$250,000. The sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled sometime after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mike Warner. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with assistance from the Minehaha County Sheriff's Department and South Dakota Highway Patrol.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow